Concentration Exam Annotated Bibliography

Group One: What is Professional/Professionalism? Blurring Boundaries

These pieces in some way push back at established ideas about what is queer/LGBTQ and/or what is professional a profession as well as looking collectively at ideas of how one becomes a professional or a part of a community of practice.


Summary: This work consists of 25 chapters that tell stories of mentoring and theorize about the role of mentors (past, present, and future) in our field (RhetComp). Eble points to “mutual benefit and respect” as the two key characteristics of collegial mentor/mentee relationships. Contributors argue for mentoring as a scholarly practice. Mentor relationships, they say, are more complicated than just coaches or guides or advisors or parental figures (and very high stakes for the field). Mentoring has gone from being never mentioned in our field (in the 90’s) to being an important concept/buzzword now.

Implications: The important uses/observations from this book for me are twofold. First, it has reminded me of the ways I am mentored that I may have overlooked. For example, the chapter titled “Graduate Student Writing Groups as Peer Mentoring Communities” gives me another way to continue to think about my own mentoring in ways I might have otherwise forgotten or put on the “back burner.” Secondly, this book puts together many different types of stories that are as varied as the definitions of mentor. Stories are collected and recounted regardless of negative or positive (and everything in between) experience. These sorts of “case studies” (or, as Eble calls them, “snapshots in time”) give me important examples and models (“effective models” and “heuristics”) for building my own dissertation research. Eble herself advocates in the conclusion for future stories on mentoring that looks further across boundaries such as sexuality (and race, class, ability, etc.).

Summary: Jablonski considers the implications of a career studies lens on technical communication as a profession. Jablonski points out that, for career theory, temporal, universal, interdisciplinary, and dual characteristics are key and create a “powerful lens for understanding the social contexts of work” (11). Traditional career assumptions and boundaries are shifting and evolving (this is something many have said and is something that Hailey, Load, and myself say in an upcoming article in the Journal of Technical Writing and Communication (Volume 41). Jablonski though troubles the idea of the “boundaryless career” and instead mentions that “life paths” may be a better way to think about professionalization. In this way, technical communicators are enacting careers and the key characteristic for success is flexibility and ability to shift/change. Jablonksi ultimately argues for a genre studies method based in activity systems theory as a way to understand how technical communications knowledge and skills can be enacted across workplaces and jobs.

Implications: This piece is potentially critically influential to future dissertation work for me because Jablonski and those he cites (Bridges, for example) pushes hard at the idea that a job is a social artifact and that the idea of job and profession are being radically changed/altered over time – but also that more research must be done. For me this is queering. It has a direct connection into the ways that sexuality and identity are also in flux. I believe LGBTq persons may be among the very best equipped to deal with career spaces where boundaries are shifting (though perhaps not disappearing). These ideas also push forward the idea that as technical communicators (and as Rhetoric & Composition scholars) we must continue to focus not only on skills for specific jobs and workplaces but also on rhetorical and analytical skills around professionalization and language/discourse.


Summary: Lave & Wenger define learning not as the acquiring of structure, but learner’s access to participatory roles in “expert performances” (17). They see the acquisition of knowledge/expertise as a movement from marginal “outsider” status inward toward “old-timer” status in a group or community of practice. Lave & Wenger see learning as being about an increased access to performance (22). Their concept of legitimate peripheral participation (or LPP) looks at the ways individuals become a part of communities of practice (not just through apprenticeship but through participation in myriad roles). In this way, learning becomes about ways of being in a social world, not just “coming to know about” the world. Lave & Wenger see discourse production itself as social and cultural practice, not just some kind of product or representation of practice and culture.

Implications: In my own research I believe it will be important to draw connections between the ways that all people professionalize via LPP and also the ways that LGBTq people become “professional” sexual minorities by mentoring with and under other LGBTq persons. Along with Vygotsky’s ZPD and Eble & Gaillet’s Stories of Mentoring (among others), LPP will offer me another way to analyze the stories/narratives of being LGBTq in the workplace/profession that I will collect in
my research. Leaning not only how these individuals were able to move from outsider status to old-timer status but also whether they were able to make those moves at all will be key. I also think it will be useful to pose the question as to whether or not LGBTq individuals believe that they were apprenticed into becoming LGBTq, and what an “expert performance” of being LGBTq looks like to them.


Summary: Libretti is critical of the tendency for Marxists to universalize class struggle while often ignoring or downplaying race, gender, and sexuality struggles. Libretti sets the work of Lechy and Baldwin, two gay men of color, against Marxist theory and queer theory to explore just how intertwined and complicated issues of class are when combined with issues of sexuality. These identities are not separable, he argues. Racial patriarchal capitalism must be addressed before issues of discrimination and repression based on sexuality and sexual identity will ever be able to truly be addressed.

Implications: The implications of class as they intersect with sexuality and gender identity issues are often ignored or not dealt with in ways that give full credibility to the importance both play in individual lives. It’s important in my own research not to do this. Libretti’s piece here is one I will be able to cite in a growing chorus of scholars who call for class to be made a part of our discussions about LGBTq experience (especially in the workplace). One useful thing for me mentioned in the book is Kelly Anderson's documentary about LGBTq workplace discrimination in the workplace called Out at Work. Libretti describes the documentary as “excellent” (see the annotation of this film in this bibliography).


Summary: Ross asserts that the desire to “make a living” has always been the thing that motivates humanity. He begins by framing the importance of profession in individual lives. Ross points out that nations can no longer “insulate their people from the transnational traffic of information, iconography, and money” (3). Ross discusses the contingency of higher education in the US especially among academic professionals – younger adjuncts and graduate teachers he says have been “deprofessionalized” in ways that are now forming an “embryonic labor movement that may yet transform the workplace, regardless of whether it can arouse larger numbers of the securely tenured from their apathy” (8). He goes on to say that “the concomitant demystification of academe and its genteel cult of disinterestedness has cleared the way for a more accurate assessment of its work life—an advance in consciousness that will bear more fruit as higher education moves further along the road of industrial restructuring” (8).

Implications: Ross’s focus on the future (and further) destabilization of the
academy as it pursues or is subsumed further into global economic models is interesting to me when laid against the ways that LGBTq issues and employees (in my case, scholars) may be queering the academies workspaces. The push for partnership benefits, same sex spousal hires, and the increasing presence of non-traditional scholars who enter the academy and change its face all continue to push forward these questions. Will LGBTq scholars play an active role in the continuing disruption/queering of the academy’s very structure and not just in scholarly content? Is the move toward a globalized, multi-national university truly queer or a further reinscribing of corporate ideals of professionalization and hegemony?


Summary: These eight essays traverse the topics of GLBTQ issues and attitudes within ecclesiastical institutions (both Episcopal and Roman Catholic), a national Japanese-American organization (that endorsed same sex marriage), financial planning organizations, and the local news media in addition to essays on making allies of co-workers and changing images within the media of LGBTq people. In each essay, the authors argue for greater participation and visibility (whether discursively, financially, physically, etc.) as a means for LGBTq persons to achieve greater acceptance and overcome homophobic attitudes. These essays seem to inhabit the space of both inspirational/example narrative as well as game plan/blueprint for LGBTq individuals and organizations to follow as they seek greater acceptance.

Implications: I think the primary usefulness of this volume (including some of the other sections of the book that I did not annotate such as Part III: Working with Students and Part IV: Working in Professional Training Programs) will be to show the growing availability of professional resources, especially within the higher educational community. This could become a part of a larger list in a section of a dissertation showing that resources are on the rise.


Summary: Vygotsky names three things as his main purpose in the work: 1) the relationship between humans and their environment, 2) what activities led humans to establish labor as the primary way of relating to nature (environment), and 3) what are the “psychological consequences” of these activities? (19). His idea of the “zone of proximal development” (or ZPD) is the distance between a person’s independent/unsupervised developmental level and the potential development they could/would gain under supervised guidance or collaboration. In this way, the ZPD tries to measure/determine potential/embryonic ability/functionality (Vygotsky uses the metaphor of “buds” or “flowers” versus “fruits”).

Implications: Most important for my own work is the “zone of proximal
development” (or ZPD). The ZPD is applicable to the ways that individuals (including LGBTQ individuals) are better acclimated into a community by means of mentorship, guidance, or collaborative work/supervision. Use of ZPD could take many forms including the mentoring of LGBTQ professionals by LGBTQ mentors (or “old timers” as Lave & Wenger would say) or the inclusion of LGBTQ wording and inclusive-training. The ZPD assumes a level of initial or “up-front” investment that will ultimately reap benefits and fully formed professionals. It also takes pressure of LGBTQ people to be fully responsible for their own assimilation and success in institutional spaces (something I can speak to in my own experiences in the professional world – feeling like I have to represent “all gay men everywhere, or all LGBTQ people who are technical writers ever”).


**Summary:** Warner points out, from the start, that publics themselves are “queer creatures” – you can’t see them or easily avoid them, he says. Warner argues that a public is a metacultural concept that gives rise to a tension between the particular and general. Because of this, Warner asserts that when people address a public, they engage in a struggle (whether organized/calculated or disorganized) over the very conditions that form the relationship between individual and public (or individual as part of public). Chapter one explores the concepts of public and private and the gendered nature of these within the Western world (masculinity as a way of occupying public space and femininity as “language of private feeling”).

**Implications:** What is fascinating for me are the ways that LGBTQ people must exist often in professional spaces using the largely private languages/forms that Warner lays out (nonofficial, personal, concealed, circulated orally, known to initiates, etc.) versus the public forms (official, impersonal, in physical view of others, circulated in print, known widely, etc.). Ultimately he draws on Arendt in saying that “the personal is political” (61) and concludes that mass publics and Counterpublics are damaged publics in the ways that gender and sexuality are damaged forms of privacy. Warner writes that counterpublics and their discourses have to challenge hierarchy/hegemony by “projecting the space of discursive circulation among strangers as a social entity” (121). This will be an important thought in the ways that, as LGBTQ persons professionalize – often through forming of professional organization/organizations – they must usually project through a social entity. In other words counterpublics must copy/utilize public forms in order to insert counterpublic discourse into the public sphere.
Group Two: What is LGBTq? Queering Definition/Defying Definition

These are definitional pieces that attempt to define not just terms but the actual fields of Queer Theory and Lesbian and Gay Studies themselves and seeks to examine the current conversations and debates within those fields as they apply to LGBTq identity.


**Summary:** Berlant and Warner talk about queer theory as something that cannot be defined. It is something that is hot and that they say (in 1991) that the work of is more prevalent among grad students than faculty. Queer is not just (or necessarily) LGBT they say but must be made available to different populations at different times. Queer theory and practice exists in multiple localities and we must resist the temptation to make one or a handful of theorists (think Butler, Sedgwick, Foucault, etc.) into metonyms for queer theory. Articulating sexual practices (and identities) is a labor that has paralleled making these same practices and categories and identities ambiguous. Unlike many fields (sociology, psychology, and anthropology, etc.) that have thrived by offering expertise to the state, queer theory resist systematizing and settling. In this way, they say, queer theory teaches us about any given thing (x) is actually not political but about personal survival. Queer commentary has produced vital and generative analyses of: “cultures of reception; the relations of the explicit and implicit, or the acknowledges and the disavowed; the use and abuse of biography for life; the costs of closure and the pleasure of unruly subplots; vernacular idioms and private knowledge; voicing strategies; gossip; elision and euphemism; jokes; identification and other readerly relations to texts and discourse” and through critical voice (349).

**Implications:** What can queer commentary contribute to professional life? How do the ways that queer theory gets positioned as “not offering enough expertise” contribute to it also being dismissed as a valid field? By non-queers? By LGBTq scholars themselves? How has, or has queering/queer theory/a queer lens taken hold more in academic discourses over the last (nearly) 20 years in relation to the ways Berlant and Warner frame it? How can queer commentary address the “seedy underbelly” (read: nonprofessional) of professional life?


**Summary:** Brownworth takes on lesbian and gay assimilationists who advocate for queers to “act straight” and not “offend straight culture” in order to gain wider acceptance into straight culture. The acceptance of assimilation culture within the LGBTq community is the validation of homophobia and self-loathing. She warns against the literature of assimilation in our community (for example Paglia, Bawer, Sullivan, etc.). Following these assimilationists we would simply place homophobia
into our own agenda—we must avoid saying: “straight is the best way.” What separates queer and straight people, says Brownworth, is not sex but sensibility. In fact, sex is the way we are perhaps most like straight people.

**Implications:** To Brownworth, our very existence and survival is at stake if we listen to lesbian and gay assimilationists. It is through our radical queerness that we remain visible and demand our place in the social order. The relationship between professional “assimilation” and gay assimilation, I believe, is a strong and one that will require further connection and inquiry in the professional lives of LGBTq persons. How do LGBTq professional scholars in Rhetoric & Composition resist assimilation? Or do they at all? How does this professional assimilation feed into or spring from assimilation in personal lives?


**Summary:** D’Emilio gives a current (early 2000’s) lay of the land in the state of the LGBTq community. He notes the ways that gay men and lesbians have begun to generatively and productively share power and skills within the community. He discusses the effects of the AIDS epidemic on the community and issues of race and also the ways that facets of the community offered skills to the community (such as lesbian-feminists bringing “sharper analytical tools”). Ultimately D’Emilio argues for community historians to undertake further archiving and studying of LGBTq organizations and politics. We need to study how LGBTq persons have worked across types of organizations he says (like churches, government, political parties, etc.) and also regionally (and I would suggest internationally).

**Implications:** The most important takeaway from D’Emilio’s piece for me is the moment where he says that so far, most discussions about racial and ethnicity (he says nothing of class) in LGBTq organizations and movements has been about inclusion with little discussion about actually reshaping agendas due to diverse memberships and leadership. Of course this anthology was published in 2004 and I’m sure the face of LGBTq organizations has continued to shift – although to what extent I’m not sure. Though he does not explicitly call for researching of the histories of LGBTq persons in workplaces, I think this call is implied in his wider call of “organizations.” He may have overtly LGBTq organizations in mind but I would also call for examining how LGBTq persons have operated in non-LGBTq workplaces and organizations (whether progressive and inclusive or not).


**Summary:** Edelman joins a growing chorus in queer theory (along with Bersani) that argues for queer non-futurity. He contends that the Child is an ever present in society and has “come to embody for us the telos of the social order and come to be seen as the one for whom that order is held in perpetual trust” (11). For Edelman, the Child is then “impregnating heterosexuality, as it were, with the
future of signification by conferring upon it the cultural burden of signifying futurity—(and) figures our identification with an always about-to-be-realized identity” (13). Because of the Child, we must “imagine each moment as pregnant with the Child of our Imaginary identifications” (14). This for Edelman is the fetishized fixation of heteronormativity on “the compulsory narrative of reproductive futurism.” To be queer then is to “undo” the future... it is not about being but is about embodying the remainder of the Lacanian Real. Queer is Edelman’s anti-matter so-to-speak. So to be queer in this sense is to be without a future... it is to eliminate futurity.

Implications: Edelman’s work here is purposefully shocking and radical to an extent I think. He makes valid points, but I think he neglects our own role as LGBTq persons as “the reproduced” and as parts of larger families (both real and metaphorical). I believe we must carve out a space for both the Child and the Queer. I think LGBTq persons are not only an integral part of culture and society, I believe they always have been and will be even more so. This is no less true in professional and public spaces. I believe we must (mostly) work within not work to escape from... although at times the struggle to escape from will have productive results. Edelman’s understanding of the Child and futurity though offers others and myself a vocabulary and lens to talk about the ways that heteronormative culture restricts the expressions of our sexual identities.


Summary: Giffney asserts that queer theory cannot be assimilated into a single discourse and that queerness cannot really define an identity but can only disturb one (2). Further, queer is something in oppositional relation to normativity. This edited collection is organized into sections around the categories of identity, discourse, normativity, and relationality. To Giffney, queer theory is “an exercise in discourse analysis” and is either a tool for deciphering and understanding texts or “an ontological property waiting to be uncovered within the text itself” (7). Another key concept in the introduction is that identity can’t be assigned into categories to be occupied and owned but must instead be seen as territory that is navigated and revised from moment-to-moment (7).

Implications: Moving toward dissertation work it will be critical for me to further explores the essays in this volume (especially the identity and discourse sections). Giffney’s idea that queer is not and cannot be an identity category is in opposition to many other queer theorists but the structure of this very book itself seems to “queer identity” while still retaining the term. For example, identity cannot be stable or fixed, but is still something a person may “have” at any given moment (even if it is always changing and shifting). Queer theory as a discursive tool however is more clearly an important takeaway from this piece. As a tool to either understand texts (of all types) or as a quality inherent in a text that needs to be uncovered, queer becomes a lens by which we can gain new understanding into all stories (whether queer stories, normative stories, or otherwise). These two
concepts (queer as non/identity and queer as discursive tool(s)) will figure in key ways in my work.


Summary: Hennessy discusses the ways that queer visibility is increasingly tied to the relentless expansion of capital. Increased visibility in a commodity culture she says is limited progress because LGBTQ persons become welcome/visible as consumers but not as social and political subjects. Hennesssey draws heavily in her piece on Judith Butler to acknowledge the ways that discourses set limits on the ways we see sexuality and gender. She adopts Butler (and Foucault’s) premise that identity is an issue of discursive constitution/representation. But she also tries to articulate and negotiate the relationship between discursive constitution and material constitution (discourses mediate these things – like labor, wealth, health care, food, etc. – but are not “simply discursive” she says).

Implications: I do believe that materiality is also rhetorical; in this sense I part ways with Hennessey. Systems of power and wealth distribution also are discourses themselves. Other questions I ask here are: How are LGBTQ workers “accepted” as laborers? Does this translate into social and political acceptance? Hennessey discusses the ways that “gay friendly” companies and merchandisers still participate in patriarchal systems and structures that oppress people of color and promote misogyny. What about LGBTQ workers? How do they participate in problematic distributions of capitalist structures? How can we be visible in ways that don’t simply participate in and reinforce commodity culture? Or can we? This is an important piece to put into conversation with many others in this bibliography because it asks fundamentally; can one participate in capitalism and be queer in any way?


Summary: In this 1996 work, Jagose notes that it is not just that queer has yet to take form or solidify but rather that this elasticity and inability to be determined is one of its most basic characteristics. Jagose says (p. 9) that essentialism assumes that homosexuality has universally always been around... and that constructivism sees it as socially constructed (like gender) in a time and place. The volume looks into subsections such as lesbian feminism, the idea of queer, gay liberation, the limitations of identity, and so on. It does not however address questions of trans issues, race, class, ability, and so on in ways that newer queer theory intro volumes do (see Sullivan).

Implications: Jagose’s noting that we do not know what the future holds for queer theory is fascinating in light of current conversations in the field (see my literature review for these). Even in the 90’s, Jagose emphasizes queer’s inability to stabilize and its role as a site of permanent becoming. Like postmodern architecture she
says, it turns identity inside out – “exoskeletally.” These thoughts lead me to wonder how LGBTQ professionals, especially in Rhetoric & Composition, see “stable LGBTQ identity”? Is there such a thing? How does one portray (narrativize, construct, etc.) one’s identity as an LGBTQ person over time? How does this shift and change and evolve?


**Summary:** O’Hara states that for gay men, having our mouths full of dick is a political statement like no other. Promiscuity isn’t a “right” he says but is, for gay men, instinctual. He maintains that monogamy is unnatural and has only been used to control and police human sexuality. He also asserts that being HIV positive has freed him from the “negative world” where gay men have to repress their true sexual desires. It’s not that “some sex” is good he says, but that sex itself is good in and of itself.

**Implications:** Following O’Hara’s assertions about sex and sexuality into the professional world, I wonder: is professionalism and “acting professional” unnatural and only used to control people and police human activity and identity? Is being “unprofessional” actually instinctual for some (especially when what is “unprofessional” is often set up culturally to coincide with the very things they are not)? Is it at our very core to rebel against and resist historically white, male, middle-class, heteronormative ideas about “acting professionally” (especially for those of us who do not fit these categories)? I think O’Hara’s blunt and self-embracing and accepting approach to sex and sexual identity as a gay man can and should be investigated as they potentially relate and parallel LGBTQ persons’ experiences with professional identity. How is professionalizing like policing? Or how is professionalizing policing?


**Summary:** Muñoz believes that queerness is future and future is queerness. Both are a horizon, are not yet here, both are an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer... The future is queerness’s domain. To Muñoz queerness is also a performative because it is not simply a being but a doing for and toward the future. Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality and concrete possibility for another world.” Muñoz allows that “in our everyday life abstract utopias are akin to banal optimism” and that “recent calls for gay or queer optimism seem too close to elite homosexual evasion of politics” Indeed “concrete utopias can also be daydreamlike, but they are the hopes of a collective, an emergent group, or even the solitary oddball who is the one who dreams for many” (3). For Muñoz the future is the present and queer aesthetics are “the great refusal” in the face of heteronormative culture. We must “vacate the here and now for the then and there” and “engage in a collective temporal
distortion” (185). “From shared critical dissatisfaction we arrive at collective potentiality” (189). For Muñoz, the future is all we have... it is where we must exist.

**Implications:** Muñoz’s work here is an important response to the traction within queer theory that scholars like Edelman and Bersani have been gaining over the last ten years or so. He responds to the “no future” cry of nihilism to offer that perhaps the future itself is queerness. This gives a kind of hope and optimism for LGBTq persons not found in Edelman and Bersani—a response to their seeming “give up the fight, we’ll never get there” mantra. Putting these two important/current threads of queer theory into conversation with one another is crucial not just for trendy, theoretical reasons but because these very thoughts, disagreements, and ways of performing identity are playing out in millions of LGBTq lives even now. These ways of thinking about queerness also filter into the professional lives and actions of LGBTq persons.


**Summary:** Murray critiques queer theory for what he perceives as its ineffectiveness. He feels that not only has being openly LGBTq not brought about enough change or brought about the end or destabilization of “hierarchies of domination” but also that many LGBTq persons continue to align themselves with those who repress “less respectable” forms of gender and sexuality. Murray’s well-made point here is that it is misogyny that is most often the culprit in these societal spaces. He writes: “...almost always the sexually-penetrated biologically-male partner has been treated like a female wife, concubine, or prostitute by the older, more powerful, more conventionally masculine ‘partner.’” Human category boundaries are “fuzzy” says Murray and “playing with” such boundaries over history has done, in his mind, remarkably little to destabilize enduring hierarchies. Murray is especially critical of queer theory’s focus on textual representations of LGBTq persons and longs for a day when people will be focused on “how people involved in homosexuality live their lives.”

**Implications:** For me, Murray sets up a false dichotomy (as do many others) between textual discourse analysis and LGBTq lives as embodied rhetorical spaces. I do however have to allow him his space primarily as critique. I think a great many LGBTq persons (in and outside the academy) would agree with him and say they want the same ends (a dismantling of a misogynistic culture and of hierarchies of domination and a greater focus on LGBTq lived lives). I also think Murray overestimates a (perceived) chasm between theory and praxis. Though the queer theorizing of scholars such as Butler, Foucault, and Sedgwick may seem inaccessible and out of the mainstream, they raise important phenomenological and genealogical issues that “trickle down” (or “trickle over to”) scholars and researchers doing more pragmatic study, research, and teaching.

Summary: Patton explores the intertwined relationship between the “gay movement” and the “new right.” She looks specifically at how the two groups respond to and frame on another in the public sphere. She argues that by focusing on one another, these groups have created disidentificatory practices. This, in a way, is a result of a standstill in the power struggle between the two – if one group cannot gain the upper hand; they both instead look to find temporary allies through disidentification. This way, Patton argues that identity discourse is actually a strategy in the ongoing battle to reconstitute political subjects. Importantly, Patton proposes that identities should in fact be a “series of rhetorical closures linked with practical strategies, implicit or consciously define, alliances and realliances that in turn affect the whole systems for staging political claims” (147). To Patton, identity is a rhetorical effect that: elides its construction, re-narrates or implies a history, produces a “deontic closure,” and operates performatively in a field of power in which “citational chains link symbols and political subject position” (162). Patton draws on Sedgwick’s claims that essentialist and constructionist are asymmetric, and that this is why they resist dialectical resolution. Patton says we live in the political reality of our identity effects (175).

Implications: One of the most important points Patton makes to my own work is: “The crucial battle now for ‘minorities’ and resistant subalterns is not achieving democratic representation but wresting control over the discourses concerning identity construction” (173). I believe she’s right and that the representation(s) will come later after discourses are won over. Her work here is dense and she draws on Butler, deCerteau, Bordieu, and others. Arguing that identity be a series of “rhetorical closures” is akin to Spivak’s strategic essentialism and I believe useful for thinking about identity as socially constructed and always shifting and changing (and as something we construct and not vice versa).


Summary: In her 2003 work, Sullivan steps us through the various facets of queer theory: assimilation versus liberation; questions of queer being versus doing; questions of queer race; performance/performativity; trans issues; the queering of straight sex; discontent within community; sadomasochism and resistance; fetishism and the politics of perversion; and the queering of popular culture. She also gives us, in the introduction, a brief walk through some of the history of sexual identity and the ways that LGBTq subjectivity has been discursively produced over the last two hundred years.

Implications: The chapter on community and its discontents is especially useful for my work. Community is talked about not as the “covering over” of differences to find unity, but rather the experience of the “impossibility of communion” and of radical difference” (148). This is one important way to address the ostensible lack of coherence of the LGBTq community and the claims that there is no community there. Overall, this volume strikes me as a little “bare bones” because of its lack of an introduction (aside from a brief preface) and a conclusion. Chapters seem to be
set up to “speak for themselves.” It seems more like a short work dedicated to give the nuts and bolts of queer theory more than it seems concerned with re-situating or further defining ideas of queer theory. A large part of my own grappling with this book was to try to “solve contradictions” – issues and questions that seemed suddenly contradictory (or queered?). I often thought that queer theory would/should tell me not to have to solve things. And yet I’ve always seen learning as being about a gaining, or at least moving toward, understanding? (is this too much like the banking model of education though?) Does “understanding” assume order, congruity, and solution? In what ways do we have to continue to queer the idea of why we are even in the academy? What learning even means?


**Summary:** Warner asserts that anyone who comes to a queer self-understanding does so by way of seeing their stigmatization as connected to gender, the family, notions of individual freedom and nationalism, consumption and desire, racial fantasy, deep cultural norms, etc. Being queer, he says is about fighting these issues at all times—and always with repercussions. To live in society is to live in heterosexuality and heterosexuality is always already within all mental categories. Warner quotes Hannah Arendt in saying that “queer politics opposes society itself” (xxvii).

**Implications:** Warner points out that “churches, kinship, traditional residence—have been less available for queers” (xvii) and I would also assert other kinds of fraternity, and group bonding have also been less available too. In invoking Arendt, Warner gets at an important point: the queering of society is no less than an attempt to topple society itself. In the same way, queering professionalism and the presence of queers in professions also means radical, if not always fast moving, change and alteration for professionalism. Warner, as much or more than anyone else I’ve read seems to understand that as queer subjects we are always marginalized and our attempts to find a place “inside the margins” is always going to have fallout. What are the stories that LGBTq professionals have about the tensions between queer subjectivity and family, desire, nationalism, cultural norms, etc.?
Group Three: Theoretical Underpinnings/Interweavings (Meta Structures)

These pieces map institutional, professional, and hegemonic Spaces by looking into power structures and public spaces. How do they operate, what are they? How are they changing? How are they discursive and rhetorical?


Summary: Althusser lays out his concepts of ISA and RSA. An ISA (or ideological state apparatus) consists of state structures that appear to be good for people (and may or may not be). Examples of these are organized religious bodies, the family, schools, the legal apparatus, trade unions, media, and other components of culture. ISA’s have ideological power, though overt power backs them up (laws, etc.) An RSA (or repressive state apparatus) are a culture’s spaces of performative power (such as jails, forms of punishment, the military, police, the courts, and so on). RSA’s have overt power but ideology backs these up. Althusser believes that even though we may have an awareness of the ideology we still must exist within it—it is always with us and it is always already too late to get outside of it or beyond it. So for example if you are suspicious of capitalist structures, ISA’s will comfort you, helping you believe that perhaps though fraught with contradictions, at least one has one’s church, family, and so on to make life bearable and tolerable.

Implications: Althusser in this piece puts forward the notion of a binaristic working relationship between public and private. Further, he develops the idea of being interpellated into ideology. He believes humans are called into these ideologies by those persons or things in power (RSA’s and ISA’s). You are interpellated into a system by responding to the call. If we are offered subject positions these are our only choices, and by responding to these, we become a part of the ideological system (so for example, are you going to be a citizen, a criminal, and so on). Althusser believes we participate in the law because we get pleasure from acceding to power. So what are the subject positions put forward for LGBTq persons? How do we accede to power and in what ways do we need legal recognition (RSA’s) and societal and cultural recognition (ISA’s) of LGBTq identities in order to desire interpellation?


Summary: Anderson (who is a political scientist) helps us to see that historical situating is of the utmost importance as we consider cultural discourses and shifts in consciousness over time. He does this by focusing not on industrialization, but on print and linguistic culture. He investigates the concept of the nation-state in modern society (post-1850/Spanish-American War). He leads us to look into the ways identities get written into histories (he gives many examples including census taking practices, museums, maps, etc. – things that allow us to locate ourselves in ideology) and points out that the rise of nationalism (and imperialism) can be
greatly framed in tandem with the rise of literacy. Anderson asks: does one culture have the right to impose its cultural values upon another? The rise of nationalism changes forever our concept of time – as simultaneity arises, we see that all communities are, in fact, imagined ones. Senses of national allegiance and unity are also imagined. We can’t escape nationalism (though nationalism doesn’t always have to be a bad thing to Anderson) and we also cannot escape imagined communities. In fact, all we have are our imagined communities. Education becomes a chief export of literacy and colonialism. This also introduces implications of piracy on nationalism because ideas and thoughts about nationalism are also (in addition to being exported) simply stolen, globally and cross-culturally.

**Implications:** Anderson’s point is that hegemony is all about ideological power, perceived, imagined, real, and otherwise. Hegemony becomes the ways that those in power appeal to “common-sense” (“well of course we should be in power!” and “of course those people should not be in power!”). The power of discourse becomes the apparatus by which those in power maintain hegemony and by which nationalism “holds it all together.” How do LGBTq persons imagine communities – communities they are a part of? Communities they are excluded from? How does the imagined community of American-ness (supposedly built on things like “freedom” and “equal opportunity”) differ in its imagining from the ways that LGBTq people are actually excluded/ostracized?


**Summary:** Berlant and Freeman analyze the tactics and discourses of Queer Nation and how the group has “reconstituted queerness” and transformed the “range of reference ‘queer’ has by multiplying its specifications” (153). They call their work an “anti-assimilationist narrative about an anti-assimilationist movement” but note that the current political climate in the United States means that queer communities do not have the option of disregarding national identity. Berlant and Freeman point to visibility as crucial to Queer Nation’s successes as well as tactics in hyperspace/online places (an extension of visibility of course) and the exploitation of consumer culture and popular culture. This bringing of queer sensibilities to consumer culture help QN to “radically reconstruct citizenship.” In this way, the authors continue to chronicle and support QN (and ACT UP’s) occupation of hegemonic spaces.

**Implications:** What can Queer Nation’s effective history of challenging nationalism and assimilation teach LGBTq professionals now? Is this message of anti-assimilation too radical given the common understandings of professional and professionalization? How can LGBTq professionals also radically reconstruct citizenship in corporate and institutional and academic spaces? I think there is room to put this piece into conversation with some others here (Anderson for example). These conversations may also yield greater usefulness from this piece for my own work.

Summary: Butler discusses the power of language and name-calling to inflict injury and asks: “Is our vulnerability to language a consequence of our being constituted within its terms?” (2). This constitution (or interpellation she says invoking Althusser) sustains the body by giving it social definition. Put another way, she says a certain kind of surviving takes place in language – or “linguistic survival.” Language can either sustain the body or threaten one’s feelings of existence – such as, she offers, in the case of hate speech. She further explores the relationship between language and agency for the power of speech to act upon rhetorically she says is always tied to structures of power.

Implications: Though a large part of her work takes to task injurious language and notions of hate speech, it is in her discussion of Althususser and interpellation that I find some observations that might be the most useful in my work. “The interpellative name” she says, “may arrive without a speaker—on bureaucratic forms, the census, adoption papers, employment applications. Who utters such words? The bureaucratic and disciplinary diffusion of sovereign power produces a terrain of discursive power that operates without a subject, but that constitutes the subject in the course of its operation. This does not mean that there are no individuals who write and distribute the forms. It means only that they are not the originators of the discourse they convey and that their intentions, however strong, are not finally what control the meaning of that discourse” (34). I think this is a crucial observation and one that must trickle down into our thinking about LGBTq persons operating in institutional and professional spaces. As we seek to make change and open up institutions and workplaces to queer identities—indeed to queer them, we must be aware of the interpellative structures that are entrenched “subjectless” and yet all-powerful. What strategies can one begin to employ when seeking changes in these spaces (employment forms, applications, census forms, etc.)?


Summary: In his chapter “Walking in the City” decCerteau explores the relationship(s) between the spatial, the temporal, the lived, the narrative, and the symbolic. He uses the place and space of city blocks and neighborhoods in both real and metaphoric ways. What decCerteau attempts to describe is no less than individual and networked human culture unfolding across space and time. decCerteau paints a picture of the texts that bodies write across actions and space and time... stories that have “neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations...” (93). The acts of walking through the city (and indeed our lives’ actions as a whole) are “a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is the acoustic acting-out of language)” (98). In this way decCerteau calls walking “a space of enunciation” (98).

Implications: So can working then be a space of enunciation too? How are the
embodied ways that LGBTQ persons and all professionals live their lives an enunciation of identities? Also useful, what about deCerteau’s ideas of “being in the world”? His mentioning of a sort of “reverse Panopticon” (108) seems especially useful – seeing spaces and places as always haunted by memories and spirits – that can be invoked or not invoked. These stories/memories/spirits are held by individuals and places and give character to places and lives and also give pain and pleasure across time.


**Summary:** Grindstaff asserts that sexual identity is “essentially a public matter, for it resides in discourse. The mastery of heteronormative discourse and discursive regimes, he asserts, is still our most enduring oppressor. Moreover, the public discourse on sexuality is never merely descriptive; it remains forever normatively and thus rhetorically charged” (5). The body is more than simply an incidence of one’s sexuality, it is also a responsive collective entity that interacts with others. The queer body is not just one that identifies, it’s also a desiring body – and to Grindstaff the function of desiring is the queer body’s most important aspect. Gazing upon other queer bodies and discussing one’s body with others are more vital than simply self-identifying as queer. To Grindstaff, “identity” and “secrecy” must be reinvented and redefined as desire, because, as he says: “Desire is the most powerful form of resistance” (20).

**Implications:** Grindstaff’s perspective provides a lens to view the myriad LGBTQ professionals (and heteronormative elements of the workplace) who say “sexuality is private” and “there’s no need to talk about my sexual identity in public or in the workplace.” He makes a particularly strong appeal to LGBTQ persons to operate outside of heteronormative discourses that suppress “secrets” and foster shame. Queer identity and desire must not only be public but must also always be desirous—even in all its lustful, uncomfortable, messy sexual-ness. To what extent I wonder is “mastery of heteronormative discourses” the tool with which LGBTQ professionals equate success (the ability to “pass” as adequately “straight acting” or heteronormative)?


**Summary:** Hall emphasizes that his musings are not meant to speak for all of cultural studies or even for himself at a future point. He says that cultural studies are a discursive formation that has no simple origins – it came out of the preexisting work of others in other fields and places. It is an “open-ended” project but not a meta-discourse. The tension between a refusal to close the field off and a need to have the field stand for something is, he says, the “dialogic approach to theory” (99). He notes that he desires to return cultural studies away from the “clean air of meaning and textuality and theory to something nasty down below”
(100). He wants to return to key theoretical turns in the history of cultural studies such as the fact that cultural studies is at one point a Marxist critical practice and that Marx did not talk about or seem to understand the very things we privilege in cultural studies: language, culture, ideology, the symbolic, etc. There is a profound problem for Hall with the Eurocentrism of Marxist theory. To him a more important model for theorizing is the idea of struggling—he believes the only theory worth having is that which you must fight off. He marvels at the “rapid institutionalization and professionalization” of cultural studies in the United States as well. Dangers are not places you run away from, he says, but “places you run towards” (107). He emphasizes finally that theory is not the “will to truth” but instead is a “set of contested, localized, conjunctural knowledges, which have to be debated in a dialogical way” and must be a practice that “understands the need for intellectual modesty” (108-09).

Implications: Hall packs a lot into a relatively short essay here but what he’s saying has important implications for my work and the work of other American cultural rhetoricians and cultural studies scholars. He warns explicitly against the rapid subsuming of our work into institutions and established academic spaces. We must not have the hubris to assume we have it all “figured out” in cultural studies. Instead cultural studies must always remain messy, dirty, localized, and contested. What it means to examine and study cultural rhetorics means that we must remain open-ended, avoid the search for “truths,” and always self-examine the places theoretically that we are “moving towards” in our studies. How can we struggle with our work in ways that continue to open our work and our field(s)?


Summary: Hocquenghem hypocrisy, desire, phallocracy, sex, and discourse in the world of gay men. He looks at fetishism and race in gay sex (“I get fucked in the ass by the people my father and grandfather have fucked in the colonial wars, before doing so in their factories... I lend my ass for fifteen minutes to someone that the bourgeoisie has mythically sodomized its entire life, to the point of perfecting in him the male pride that was already instilled by Islam.”)(11). Because the heterosexual world has created homosexuality it must also sublimate it (through sentiment, friendship, and socio-economic activity Hocquenghem says). He investigates the ways that gay men and gay male culture must adopt and reemploy virility, misogyny, and value youth and bodies as sites of desire. To Hocquenghem, we too simply participate in the heteronormative structures by which we must be defined opposite – there would be no gay if there were no straight: “To demand the recognition of homosexuality as it exists today, colonized by heterosexual imperialism, is simply reformism” (51). He challenges us to also rethink the “non-desire” binary between gay men and lesbians – asking why we must detest each other sexually and bodily.

Implications: One of Hocquenghem’s more interesting assertions is the way that heteronormative capitalist culture sets up homosexuality as a “dead end” a machine-like existence (with no home of reproduction) that leaves the queer person
the choice of “couple or troll” – and he likens this to “work or vagrancy.” Are these roles for queer persons (indeed for all persons in a capitalist structure of consumer/producers) simple flip sides of the same coin? Instead of asking which we will be—productive or non-productive – can we instead ask why these are the only choices? Again, I think this begins to get at questions of queering professionalism rather than queers professionalizing. How are we reinscribing structures that simply limit our identities and complexities?


**Summary:** Lacan’s mirror stage is the one point in a human’s life (in infancy) when language hasn’t quite impressed itself on identity therefore this is also the one time that that self is clear or untainted. This image then becomes an idea that an individual can never quite attain – this image then informs an individual’s ideological subjectivity the rest of her/his life. Lacan lays out his concepts of The Imaginary (which are dreams, the id, etc.), The Symbolic (which consists of law, ideology, etc.), and The Real (which is the sense of being an organism has—something that is always already lost). To Lacan, The Real is not the real world, but the point in identity formation that informs The Imaginary, a point/moment we can never get back to (it does not exist in a tangible form, or even exist at all—the moment it exists, it becomes The Symbolic).

**Implications:** Lacan says that The Ego Ideal lies between The Imaginary and The Symbolic. This is how we can “be” an identity. Thus, we never really do anything for altruistic purposes, but always as a way to reflect and recycle, to put things into dialog with ourselves—this is the dialectic of desire (the desire to be desired). To Lacan, The Mirror Stage is the reason ideology exists. Thus, he critiques any theory that attempts to find “rational explanations” for human contexts and experiences. The ideas of The Mirror Stage and the Ego Ideal are especially useful in thinking about LGBTQ identity formation. How does living as a person in a subaltern identity category in a culture where you can never be truly accepted operate as a continuation of The Mirror Phase? Do LGBTQ persons even strive toward The Real in the same ways as heterosexual individuals?


**Summary:** Among Sedgwick’s major ideas are that cultural ‘knowledge’ about sexuality and the categories of homosexual and heterosexual keep people out of power and thus uphold an ideological closet. Sedgwick advocates that we move beyond binaries/maxims about sexuality. Her own maxims are that: people are different from one another, sexuality is not co-extensive with gender, gay and lesbian identities can’t be grouped together, nor can they be separated, problematic assumptions/essentialisms are made about nature/nurture debates. Sedgwick believes that a “Great Paradigm Shift” might actually obscure current ‘knowledge’ about sexuality (resulting in essentializing—a ‘what we know today’ manner of thinking). Sedgwick argues that the closet is important to everyone (gay or not)—it
is not a single speech act, nor an isolated phenomenon (instead it is a sort of “open secret”). For Sedgwick, secrets become eroticized—a secret becomes the secret (for her here, secrets of sexuality).

**Implications:** The idea of an ideological closet has power that moves from theoretical to real for LGBTq persons in the workplace. Sedgwick’s ideas of secrets (the closet) becoming eroticized I think also extends into both how secrets of sexuality are hidden within the workplace and how all forms of personal/private identity also become secrets within the professional sphere. Various essentializations get made within the work world as well (what is professional behavior, what is managerial behavior, what is unprofessional behavior, etc.) and the powerful combination(s) of personal/private/sexual identity interwoven with workplace identity also challenge binaries and essentialist ideas.


**Summary:** Spivak begins by interrogating Western S/subjectivities and asks how it came to be that this/these came to be established as the normative tracings of history and epistemology. She moves on to ask whether those who are in the margins of epistemic violence (the subaltern) can indeed speak. She admits that the subaltern are “irretrievably heterogeneous” and thus it is perhaps impossible for them to ever speak as one voice. She interrogates Foucault and DeLeuze’s assertions that subaltern peoples can, if given certain circumstances, speak for themselves and their own histories. She sees their “post-representationalist” assertions as a new kind of essentialism that forces diverse/impossibly fractured peoples into monolithic voices/representations. She asks: “How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics?” (27). She points out that the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant at all times and the feminine construction of the subaltern keeps women even more deeply out of power.

**Implications:** Spivak’s assertions that subaltern groups are likely far too diverse and fractured to ever truly speak for themselves mirrors closely conversations about the LGBTq community (a subaltern group within subaltern groups). Her question of how we can ever now a peoples’ consciousness even as we study their histories, stories, beliefs, and so on is especially vital as I look to study LGBTq scholars in my own dissertation work. What epistemic violence has been done upon the queer community and can their voices ever be known or told? And who should tell them? Who can tell them?
Group Four: Identity Construction Section

These were pieces I chose because they investigate or grapple with questions of identity (whether queer, professional, or any other aspect(s)) especially through the lenses of narrative, discursivity, desire/embodiment, and performance/relationality.


**Summary:** Anzaldúa writes a collage essay addressing her own upbringing and identity formation in borderlands between two cultures (American and Mexican) and all of the intricacies (geographic, linguistic, cultural, and sexual) that accompany these borderlands. As a “new Mestiza,” Anzaldúa advocates for the tolerance of contradictions and ambiguity and discusses how these things make her an effective and cathartic writer. Anzaldúa faces head on the attacks, slander, and self-esteem issues that the new Mestiza (and other minorities) face on a regular basis. Anzaldúa seeks to reclaim these negative experiences and attempts at silencing in order to strengthen and build on new, complicated, queered identities. According to Anzaldúa: “Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—la Mestiza creates a new consciousness” (102).

**Implications:** For my own work, Anzaldúa’s work is key and is unique. The idea that identities are complicated and that borderlands (both literal and cultural) often work to keep minorities silenced or confused is one I have struggled with my whole life. To see Anzaldúa reclaim this space so assertively and so strongly (even when you can feel her own pain and frustration) serves as a model for my own identity and professionalization work but as a lens through which to see the complexity of others’ as well.


**Summary:** An Ojibwa identified man, in his tribute to Anzaldúa; Bundy says the exotic is that “which gives us pause” (141) and that queer persons must embrace their exotic natures. Languages and texts too can all be exotic he says, as can silences and the unknowable histories of our future. He asks where the silenced and invisible queer body travels... “there are so very many worlds, hay muchos mundos, which we inhabit, move between, flee from, or run toward” (143). Picking up on Anzaldua’s writings about borderlands, the inhabiting of multiple worlds points to fractured identity for LGBTq persons.

**Implications:** Bundy picks up on the marginalized status of queer persons when
he says that exiles see exiles everywhere and those of us who posses, because of our queer subject positions, empathetic sensory awareness are “excruciatingly alive to the world” (144). In this way, fractured queer subjects dwelling between and among multiple worlds posses unique understandings and abilities because of and through their historic repression(s). Bundy points to the ways that Anzaldúa positions language as a primal material to build bridges between cultures and between borders, and toward freedom from oppressive categories and essentialisms. It is again through discourse, texts, narrative, and language that queer subjects navigate fractured and complex lives. Anzaldúa and Bundy’s observations are the very foundation of my own works that seeks to give LGBTq professionals voice or space for narrative pause—to peel back the silenced rind of their queer mouths.


Summary: Gopiniath notes that discourses of sexuality are inextricable from previous histories of nationalism, racism, colonization, and movement/migration. Dominant nationalistic and diasporic histories bring about the search for the purity of origin that then leads, not to discovery, but to erasure. The book as a whole looks at South Asian films, literature, and music and asserts that the elision of queer female subjectivity is actually at the center of queer diasporic texts or heterosexual feminist diasporic texts. She draws on Stuart Hall to reposition diaspora not as focused on exile from homeland but instead on survival through (and not despite) difference and in hybridity. She notes the ways that queer of color scholarship has taken to task essentialist homonormativity and says that “queer” stands for all dissident and non-heteronormative practices that actually may be completely incompatible with “gay” and “lesbian” as fixed identities.

Implications: Gopiniath explains that the “various regimes of colonialism, nationalism, racial and religious absolutism are violently consolidated through the body and its regulation” (28). When queer subjects rebel against these bodily demands, she says, they contest the dominance and the ideologies of these systems. Ultimately, those who study sexuality, race, and postcoloniality must not ignore such rebellion (interventions) of queer diasporic subjects. Gopiniath’s work here strengthens a running theme throughout many of the works I have read that sexuality, race, class, and gender are all interlinked. But further, what Gopiniath is asserting are the very real ways that misogyny and colonization are at work subjugating and controlling bodies of color. Yet, both Gopiniath and Hall seem to say that queer bodies of color do find strength through their hybrid existences. These conversations I think can and should play out further in interviews or case studies with queer scholars of color in my work.


Summary: Powell writes about her experiences researching in archives of Native history and artifacts around the Midwest. When Powell feels written on as an indigenous female scholar, she is told to “write back.” This becomes the crux of her essay; that we must “mean effectively.” We must write back, think back, and take back in the telling of the stories and histories in the face of the archiving and inscribing of empire and hegemony. In her third story, Powell tells of a graduate student in her American cultural rhetorics seminar who asks us to seek the stories within histories—“the possibility of a shared understanding of story that erupts in various histories” (123). It’s not, Powell goes on to say, that her student’s words tell us “something we didn’t know; in fact, it’s precisely the opposite. His story speaks what we feed, shapes it into a critical question that we could use to bring those feelings to bear in a way that might ‘make theory’” (123).

Implications: Powell’s exhortation to “write back” and become respectful and responsible stewards of the histories and places/spaces of our ancestors and indeed ourselves have direct implications to LGBTq persons in their professionalizing endeavors. We are as LGBTq scholars, creating lived histories and stories, and how we tell, collect, and chronicle those stories and histories (or have them told, collected, and chronicled about us) is of utmost importance. Similar to Rose, Villanueva, and others, Powell (and her student) ask us to see lived experience, place and space, narrativizing, and historiography as theory in their own right. Something I would like to explore further in my literature review.


Summary: Rose uses narrative approach to weave together tails of minority individuals who have participated in and been marginalized in the American education system. He begins with his own Italian-American roots and moves out into many tales of the ways that minorities have been labeled remedial, deficient, and hopeless. Through the key metaphor of a boundary he gets not only at marginalization but the ways that boundaries as “in-between zones” (see Anzaldúa) can also create opportunity/possibility through hardship and “vulnerability.” Rose’s point is that sometimes, for a minority, the act of being within new institutional spaces, even (especially?) marginalizing ones, can bring about transition and evolution of self. Rose does focus too though on our incomplete view of the human mind as well as our inability to be committed to equal educational opportunity as ways the education system is broken.

Implications: Though many times the LGBTq community is often portrayed or seen as generally white and middle class (mirroring proportions in general American society), its true diversity is much greater and more complex. Additionally, even the marginalized experiences of white LGBTq individuals have much in common with the stories of students of color and socio-economic disadvantage that Rose writes about. His view of borders/boundaries will tie in importantly with Anzaldúa’s work for me – the framing of LGBTq lives as
marginalized lives lived in boundaries between spaces (cultural, socio-economic, religious, professional, etc.). I think, for me, the continuing question will be how to define/view boundaries/borderlands (in more literal ways, also in metaphoric and cultural ways, as both, avoiding such binaries? etc.). Both Rose and Villanueva are crucial in the field because they have become a part of the Rhetoric & Composition canon and yet have also changed the ways professionalism is viewed in our field. The ways both have become a part of the canon and yet pushed back at the canon simultaneously are analogous to ways that queerness can operate both within and against professionalization.


**Summary:** Villanueva explores his own story as a Puerto-Rican American and the stories of others of color within the academy. He looks into the ways that hegemony both holds minorities down/back and the ways that it creates opportunities (but also complicates the ways this can play out in things like “tokenism,” for example). Villanueva makes strong connections between hegemony and rhetoric. He points out that rhetoric/language is a principle means (if not the only means) by which change can occur (in any setting or culture). He turns to Gramsci’s idea that domination is only possible by consent and that the acceptance of worldviews and grand narratives allow us to continue to be oppressed in dominant society.

**Implications:** Domination by consent has strong ties to the closet for LGBTq persons – especially as they interact with institutions and professional spaces. In fact, the act of coming out of the closet is one of the strongest breakages of domination by consent. The power to name and define ourselves is what Villanueva argues for here. We must engage in new conversations (“new consensus” as Villanueva calls it) and push at old boundaries and definitions. “Hegemony is rhetorical” Villanueva says (128) as he points out (via Freire) that to change the world we must change language as well. In a broad, overarching way, my work will have to address changing attitudes about LGBTq people and where they fit in professional spaces (not just how others feel about us, but how we feel about our spaces). Language (definitions, terms, use, discrepancies, omissions) is the key way that LGBTq people explore and explain their relationship to larger institutions and spaces. I suspect Villanueva’s ideas of language as power will come up again-and-again.


**Summary:** Whittle, a transgendered activist, writes about the “hegemony of gendering” and about queer theory as an attempt to “deconstruct the gendered and sexed praxis of academia” (117). He also sees himself in a “privileged position” as someone who can fight gender hegemony through gender blending. He draws on Kate Bornstein’s assertion that gender fluidity allows for any number of genders
and that as identities shift, so do boundaries and that those who assert that gender is “real” are actually “gender terrorists.” These people exist in the LGBTq community as well as in the wider heteronormative world and we must, through our gender (non)performance and through our words and discourses, challenge these and tear them down.

Implications: Trans perspectives are crucial when thinking about queer identity in the workplace. Trans persons often cannot “pass” and do not have the same choices about visibility that gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons may have. In these ways, I think trans persons must face issues of queer identity more quickly and fully than other queer persons may. Trans issues and experiences as professionals in academia may be one of, if not the, most active site of collisions between and intersections of sexual/gender identity and professional identity development. I think Whittle offers a useful lens to ask trans professionals how the hegemony of gender may play out even among lesbian, gay, and bisexual professionals and how trans people may feel exponentially more ostracized in the professional world.
Group Five: LGBTq Identity and Scholar/Teacher

These works look at the intersections of sexuality and teaching and/or researching as a profession.


**Summary:** Alexander’s book is focused on how sexuality interacts with the composition classroom and literacy studies. He especially focuses on student reading and writing and looks at sites for pedagogical development including: queer theory for straight students, transgender rhetorics, and gay marriage as a political issue in the classroom. He also discusses confronting resistances to queer/sexuality issues in pedagogy. In this way, the volume functions as a critical resource for any instructor in the writing classroom looking to integrate sexuality/queer theory into pedagogy. It is the first book-length work on queer pedagogy since Malinowitz’s seminal 1995 *Textual Orientations*.

**Implications:** Though Alexander’s book is very student in the composition classroom-centered; there are many relevant parts for my own studies. In the chapter “discursive sexualities” his characterization of sexuality as “sexual literacy” – something both discursive and performative is important for me to draw the connections between the language used surrounding sexuality and the identities people feel and create—how people enact discursive understandings of sexual identity and conversely how sexual identity comes to be written and codified. He writes that sexuality– with race, gender, and religion must be acknowledged as crucial in forming Western contemporary senses of literacy (5). I would extend this thought to identity as well and the interplay between literacy and identity (rhetorical embodiment). Alexander also includes, in his introduction, a considerable discussion of terminology which terms he uses throughout the book and why. This is also another important model for me as I move toward dissertation work – I can see great value in a section like this in an introductory chapter.


**Summary:** Anzaldúa asserts that naming herself is a survival tactic and that while others may name us to box us in, we name ourselves to ensure we are not erased. She talks about the ways that spaces of queer theory have been largely occupied by Anglo/Europeans who “write up” queer persons of color and recolonize and reinscribe dominant observations about subaltern queer persons. This also limits the ways we think about queer. She admits that to name without fragmenting and excluding is a struggle. Identity is not simply a group of holes or spaces that are filled, but instead she writes that “Identity is a river – a process” (267). As such it flows over and through spaces and is different depending on where it is viewed from – the people who view it from one place on the riverbank see different things
than others somewhere else. Queer readers she says want to not only interact but they also want to add to the text. Both reading and writing are about identity in the sense that one either empathizes and identifies or disidentifies. Anzaldúa says that when she writes about ideas she tries to flesh them out and embody them rather than abstracting them further.

**Implications:** The rainbow, a symbol of the LGBTq community, is originally a Native American conception of a bridge—a mechanism by which different people and cultures and life forces can communicate with one another. For Anzaldúa, we must open up beyond the very dominant white tropes of “lesbian experience” or “gay experience” to, quite literally, become queerer in what counts as queer. She discusses the ways that she cannot separate out parts of her identity to the detriment of others and how she sees the reader of her texts as becoming more and more important, on equal footing with the author. It is an intimate relationship where the audience’s ability or willingness to connect are of utmost importance. This gets at some of the very questions I might be tempted to ask in dissertation research (“do you consider yourself more lesbian or black? More middle class or more female?”) but most avoid and look past. Identity and the ways identity plays out in writing and reading—in the construction of meaning-making practices and meaning itself—must be seen as irrevocably intertwined and layered.


**Summary:** Barrios argues that LGBTq pedagogies often too focused on set (essentialized) identity and cannot account then for the “multiplication” of these identities (especially in online spaces). Barrios uses queer community pride flags as a way to illustrate how identities have multiplied. His term “action horizon” is the concept of students seeing themselves in the public sphere shaping and confronting real complex problems—he uses three LGBTq flags as correspondent to three classroom activities: an online asynchronous discussion, doing writing in a computer classroom, and paper assignments. He argues that each of these three scenarios push students to “enact the action horizon.”

**Implications:** Though it deals chiefly with classroom pedagogy, Barrios’ work is significant for my work because it asks us to complicate the notion of an “LGBTq identity” and suggests a multiplicity (ever expanding) of identities. Especially useful is his discussion of how LGBTq identities are experiencing “increased fracturing” that makes identity-based pedagogy limited in its usefulness. His “action horizon” (cf. Muñoz’s “queer futurity”) as a space where sexuality issues collide with and interact with classroom issues could also speak to spaces where sexuality meets professional space. Diversity in the workplace is oft mentioned but seldom does it go beyond what are considered “visible categories” within identity. As diversity multiplies within diversity the idea of action horizons may be as useful one in the workplace.
**Chinn, Sarah. “Queering the Profession, or Just Professionalizing Queers?”**

**Summary:** Chinn, identifying as a lesbian and feminist in the academy and in a professional space, seeks to resist professionalization due to its ways of silencing (and the ways it asks us as LGBTQ+ people to self-silence). Chinn points out “to be professional is to be manipulated” (246). She maintains that lesbians (and indirectly all LGBTQ+ people and minorities) must remain angry, activist, erotic/sexual, and full of drive/passion and unwilling to compromise when it comes to professionalization. Chinn points out that there is still “professional behavior” that we are expected to adhere to and the ways this continues to reflect the dominant discourses in society (male, white, heterosexual, middle/upper class, etc.). Chinn also says that traditionally/normatively, to be a professional is not just being a worker (or an amateur) but to be “polished.” This echoes Lave & Wenger’s model of LPP too (moving from unpolished to polished).

**Implications:** A very important quote for me is “The stakes of queer affiliation cannot be separated from those of institutional affiliation” (249). Chinn seems to see these stakes in conflict too. And I agree with her, to a point. As a white male who is also gay, there is conflict for me. In many ways professionalizing has seemed very normal and very accessible to me, but as a gay man I have had to avoid the pitfalls of having my sexuality become a liability (in the eyes of others). This sets up a basic conundrum in my research: can LGBTQ+ people professionalize successfully but also “LGBTq-ize” (or queer) the idea of professionalization and professional spaces themselves?

**Gibson, Michelle, Martha Marinara, & Deborah Meem. "Bi, Butch, and Bar Dyke: Pedagogical Performances of Class, Gender, and Sexuality."** *College Composition and Communication* 52.1 (September 2000): 69-95.

**Summary:** Gibson, Marinara, and Meem, three faculty members in the field of Rhetoric & Composition, discuss how power structures in the academy encourage certain strong characteristics and discourage complexity. They see themselves not only as members of a sexual minority community but discuss intricate differences within these sexual identities.

**Implications:** The authors state that their goal is to “critique both the academy’s tendency to neutralize the political aspects of identity performance and the essentialist identity politics that still inform many academic discussions of gender, class, and sexuality” (466/67). This statement is important to incorporate into my own wok here because much of the academy’s views also become a part of the academy’s professional organizations. Gibson, Marinara, and Meem are interesting to put into conversation with scholars like Lynne Weber (see annotation) who ask us to focus more on commonalities in experience versus difference. The authors here though seem to ask for more focus on difference. But this provokes a discussion of difference as lived experience and not essentialized categories.

Summary: Kopelson interrogates what she calls the “gay/queer dichotomy” between those who utilize identity-based pedagogies and those who advocate queer and performative pedagogies. She proposes “a tentative theoretical (re)solution that dis/integrates” this binary. Kopelson draws largely on Butler’s understanding of performativity (as “disruptive narratives of difference”) and how it can inform and fit into composition studies. Kopelson critiques composition’s often-assumed idea of a “real” and “stable” gay identity. She challenges this identity-based teaching and advocates a view of performativity in student writing that troubles (and queers) sexual and gender identity. Her main task is to overcome the “rift” between essentialist and queered approaches primarily through advocating for a disintegration of the rift itself (if this is even possible she says). She calls for us to exercise Foucault’s “new displacement” to turn off the things that contribute to the construction of rifts and binaries.

Implications: Kopelson mentions how both students and instructors can doubly benefit (citing Britzman) from being out in the classroom by providing difference for those who could not otherwise imagine it while also building self-esteem in those who are different. These ways of being out those can be dangerous of they foster only essentialist categories (thus playing back into heteronormative understandings of society and sexuality). But Kopelson invokes Althusser in that we are always already within identity categories and must work within them to disrupt them and overcome them (through performative pedagogy). My own stories about embracing essentialist gay identity(ies) and also disrupting these fit well into Kopelson’s argument – that LGBTq scholars, as they travel the road(s) of professionalization will and must bounce between and among these spaces.


Summary: Lehrermeier (writing under an alias), tells the story of her life from small tomboy on a rural Northeast Minnesota farm to tenured out-lesbian faculty. Her story is one of hardship and sadness (bullying, sexual abuse, failed marriage, etc.) but also triumph over obstacles (getting her PhD, attending a prestigious private university, coming out to her parents, etc.). All in all, she is careful to emphasize that there are no tidy endings to messy lives and lived experiences. She discusses the ways she felt like in order to become successful she would have to actually become someone else. Her piece is written part as autobiographical narrative but interspersed with some of her journal entries that lend framing to these biographical moments. The end product is a very effective narrative that draws the reader in emotionally (at least in my case it did).

Implications: This particular narrative, along with some others in the book, are
important models I think of the types of narratives I’m likely to collect later from interviewees. This piece helps me think about framing questions that will help me get at interviewees experiences around professionalizing in the academy as LGBTq persons. I will need to be sensitive to others’ journeys as situated in particular times and places and not as “finished” or completed at any time in terms of identity-development. Lehrermeier also mentions her former association with the label “queer” (at a more tumultuous time in her life) and her current association as a working class lesbian.


**Summary:** Malinowitz explores lesbian and gay students’ positions in the mainstream writing class and in gay-themed writing classrooms. She talks about how lesbian and gay studies, social construction theory, and liberatory pedagogy shape her own approach to lesbian and gay issues in the writing classroom.

**Implications:** Malinowitz is one of only a handful of LGBTq Rhetoric & Composition scholars who have written about LGBTq centered work. Her work is important to me based on this alone. Further, Malinowitz’s use of social construction theory, liberatory pedagogy, and her overview of lesbian and gay studies are a generative space for me to observe how one leading LGBTq scholar in our field approaches her classroom pedagogy. The idea of “assumed global validity of heterosexual knowledge” (65) and the ways that such assumptions are social constructs generated by communities of like-minded people is key to situating the positionality that LGBTq people bring to the discussion of sexuality and professionalism. Her discussion of how liberatory pedagogy takes social-epistemic rhetoric a step further and calls individuals to not only think as critical intellectuals but to actually empower them to change the conditions of their lives. This may give insight into how Malinowitz approaches teaching as an LGBTq scholar. This relationship between social-epistemic rhetoric and liberatory pedagogy may also be a useful lens to look through when thinking about how other/wider GLBTQ persons/communities situate and use this new discourse on identity and community within professional organizations and spaces.


**Summary:** Phelan approaches this piece as a self-identified lesbian (as opposed to a Lesbian). Writing in the 90’s, she seeks to examine what kinds of alliances and working relationships are required for lesbians (and, I think consequently for others in the LGBTq community) in a postmodern/poststructural landscape. She critiques “interest-group pluralism” as being a contributor to the fractured pieces of self we often see and feel (e.g. “am I more black or more lesbian? Am I more gay or more working class? Which parts of me matter more?”). She notes that if we could get past such interest-group pluralism, what opens up are the questions: “Who are we?
What do we have in common? What might justice be among diverse people?” (701).

**Implications:** The poststructuralist and postmodern landscape, says Phelan, mean that lesbians (and others) will need to form and work within coalitions and alliances with others (nonlesbians). We will have to live in and with the tension of knowing that we all as humans share “needs, desires, hopes, and fears” but do not share “every important thing, or agree on the nature of those we do share” (700). We must avoid buying into metanarratives or an ideological whole (appealing to dominant groups to accept us as a part of their metanarrative). In this way we can fight against our own and others’ oppression and silencing without needing, as Phelan says, “grand theory” to connect us or overarch us. This is a crucial moment to step back and say, as an LGBTq community, that we don’t have to find the magical things that “connect us” or bind us together. It is, instead our diversity and our humanness that connect us.


**Summary:** Roscoe looks chiefly at gay and lesbian anthropologists’ and ethnographers’ experiences in their field. He notes the “gay affinity for borders” understanding border in Gloria Anzaldúa’s words as “a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants” (3). Roscoe writes: “Ultimately, I believe the gay affinity for borders derives from the fundamental experience of being outsiders. Gay men and lesbians are participant-observers in heterosexual culture, whether in the field or at home. They survive by being sensitive to all borders—whether social conventions or rules of discourse” (204). He also accurately notes that: “The naming and unleashing of homosexual desire in discourse remains socially explosive” (204).

**Implications:** Themes of borders, margins, and liminal spaces come up again and again in queer themed pieces and studies in academia. Roscoe’s invocation of Anzaldúa and his idea of “survival” within these borders is key to beginning to look at LGBTq people’s concepts of themselves in professional/societal spaces. This leads me to wonder if queers in professional spaces seeing themselves as dwelling in borderlands is a drawback or a strength in their own eyes and experiences? Or both? Is this space of borders really an “affinity” or a place we’ve been forced into for so long that we’ve adapted and adopted it as our own? How can Roscoe’s idea of LGBTq persons as “participant-observers” serve LGBTq academics in their workplaces? Do they see themselves as more effective committee members, administrators, and professionals? These are questions I am led out of this piece to ask.

Summary: Weber argues that current scholarship and college instruction that address issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality fall short by providing a wealth of perspective and exposure to human difference but by avoiding the commonalities across these experiences. To Weber, race, class, gender, and sexuality are “historically and globally specific, socially constructed power relations that simultaneously operate at both the macro (societal) and micro (individual) levels of society” (13). She credits the Women’s Studies movement for initially addressing race, class, gender, and sexuality in tandem. She lays out six common characteristics (which she calls themes) in new race, class, gender, and sexuality scholarship: contextual, socially constructed, systems of power relationships, social structural (macro) and social psychological (micro), simultaneously expressed, and the interdependence of knowledge and activism. Gender identity(ies), for Weber, depends upon the simultaneous locations of the power hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Though I only annotate and include her journal piece here, Weber’s book length work will be important to read and fold into my dissertation work.

Implications: These hierarchies are power relationships. Weber says we must always inquire as to where the socially sanctioned power lies in any given situation and what groups gain and what groups lose. She notes that we must not confuse personal and social power since individuals can be powerful because of their knowledge and personality traits. Such personal power can be attained though in spite of lack of socially sanctioned power. Weber notes that placing these issues into our work/scholarship and before our students can help show them there are no “pure oppressors” or “purely oppressed.” Weber’s six characteristics of race, class, gender, and sexuality studies gives me an important tool to think about the complexity of identity. Rather than positioning identity as a binary: “Please rank you identity categories in importance” or a messy “clearly all of these categories are intertwined and hopeless to ever understand,” we can instead frame identity categories and complex relationships according to context, social constructedness, power relationships, macro vs. micro concerns, simultaneity, and the relationship between knowledge and activism.
Group Six: Methodologies of Professional and Sexual Identity

The following are pieces that allow me to investigate a methodological approach to researching the relationship between LGBTQ (and its intersections with race, class, and gender) identity and professional identity.


**Summary:** Grounded in Philosophy, Ahmed asks the important question “What difference does it make ‘what’ we are oriented toward?” (1). In doing so, she seeks to understand the intersections of queer studies and phenomenology. What is the spatiality of sexual orientation? Specifically, she asks how bodies “acquire orientations” toward (and away from) each other. She draws on (in addition to phenomenology) queer studies, feminist theory, critical race theory, Marxism, and psychoanalysis as well in this volume. The things that affect our orientation(s) and that we orient toward must be within what Ahmed calls our “bodily horizon” (which seems somewhat like “available means” to me, but not exactly). Ahmed uses the metaphor of the table (as a space that awaits orientation toward it – the writing table awaits the writer for example) to show how objects take on the orientations of their associated bodies. It is Ahmed’s belief that moments of disorientation (cf. disidentifying, queering, troubling, disrupting, etc.) are key as we gather around the “queer table” and that, as our orientations guide us toward the future (a queer future), help this table become a support for those of us who are queer.

**Implications:** Ahmed’s work gives me a space to respond to some of the more fatalist ideas within queer theory (Edelman, Bersani, et al.). Many of these scholars see no hope for a future for queer people and believe in a more separatist approach to the ways we see queer bodies and LGBTQ work. Ahmed however believes that, though tenuous, disorienting moments do move queer bodies toward each other and toward support systems. I think in this way Ahmed’s premise agrees with what I would take away from Lave & Wenger and others regarding the importance of LGBTQ mentors and the importance of strategic essentialism (cf. Spivak) to LGBTQ professional identity.


**Summary:** Bal’s work is grounded in English Studies Literary theory and explores systematic ways of looking at narrative in literary and other texts. Bal sees narratives in a traditional way but also as involving “spectacles, events, and “cultural artifacts that ‘tell a story’” (Introduction). What is offered here, most importantly is a methodological instrument to analyze and understand narrative texts. Concepts such as *fibula, narrative agent, the referential, rhythm, focalization, actors, time, location, levels of narration,* and so on are laid out in detail. Bal points to the omnipresence of narrative in culture (saying not everything is “narrative” but everything does have narrative aspects).
Implications: While the very short section on Foucault’s ideas in favor of the abolishing of authorship are interesting and useful, Bal’s overall approach to narrative seems more traditional and Western (grounded in traditionally male, heterosexual, white areas) than what I think would work ideally for my attempts to queer the stories that LGBTQ people tell. In other words, I think this methodology works against the content. I believe that the dissection of LGBTQ professionals’ narratives along such traditionally analytical ways removes the researcher and the reader/audience from those very narratives and their power. For my own research, I think this book serves more as an example of what I don’t want to do methodologically.


Summary: Connors discusses the importance of knowledge of the present in understanding historical data (in this case the historical aspects of Composition Studies). He invokes Burke’s terministic screens through to describe the lenses through which we view archival history and our current field. He says the question we must then ask is how we face our own prejudices? He asserts that we must start from our own prejudiced hypotheses and then play in the archives. He discusses the ways our research must address both internal and external criticisms and must be built to withstand critiques that are proportionate to our claims. There are no new methods he says, just old ones that we must “wield with more control and more self-awareness” (35). Our motives in writing our histories remain, he says, to define ourselves in a particular place and time.

Implications: I think Connors makes a strong argument here for a grounded theory approach to research. We come to our research question knowing the things or populations we want to look into but not always knowing the conclusions or ideas we’ll be drawn to. We must play in the data and research. It’s a key moment when Connors says: “even as the index cards mount up, even as the legal pad fills with hastily scrawled connections and insights, the shape of the final thesis-and-support often cannot be seen until the organizing and actual composing begin” (28). Additionally, I think this piece gives a strong argument for the “why” of a research project that will put at its center the stories of LGBTQ Rhetoric & Composition scholars. Why would I, or anyone, seek to collect and tell these stories? Here the concept of self-definition and identity and discursivity comes full circle as I myself participate in the very practices and motivations I hope to find in those I research.


Summary: Jackson writes about her dissertation research on gay and lesbian educators and how she dealt with questions of self in research (or “mesearch” as she calls it) and the controversial nature of her work (LGBTq topic areas). She focuses on the tools and takeaways from these experiences such as the shared
experiences between researcher and researched, ways to avoid reading ones own experiences onto the experiences of others, and the importance of topic interest in sustaining prolonged research. As a lesbian and former high school teacher, Jackson notes that many people do research in areas in which they are invested. She also discusses some of the ways people in the academy pushed back against her doing LGBTq work and how it made her feel fractured in terms of identity. She discusses “cultural congruity” with her participants (being from an LGBTq background like them) and “active listening” (attempts on her part to acknowledge her own investment and the ways that might interfere with he stories of others).

Implications: Jackson discusses the ways she closeted herself in her own work, taking the subtitles with the words gay and lesbian off of her CV, and so on. She ends up getting a job in academia with her non-altered CV and for that she is glad. But I think this is a moment of importance for anyone doing LGBTq work as a graduate student. How you will talk about and integrate your own subjectivity as an LGBTq person are of vital importance and will affect how those you research see you as well and the level to which they will open up to you and share with you in confidence. I also think the idea of “active listening” (which she draws from Gordon’s 2003 work Teacher Effectiveness Training) as a way to combat over-involvement to the detriment of one’s project is an important tool – one I would like to read about further (perhaps in Gordon’s original).


Summary: Lather and Smithies present a work that tells many stories about and relating to women dealing with HIV/AIDS in their lives. They see their work as being about both service and learning and as not only “giving voice” to others’ stories but to also help act as “filters” for those stories. Interestingly, the authors never name their book’s format/style. I would describe it as a meta-narrative and a split notebook. Chapters are variously broken up with transcriptions of interviews, advocacy group materials, letters and email correspondence, and commentary by the authors. The authors describe their format as both backward and forward looking and as weaving together and embedding “method, the politics of interpretation, data, [and] analysis” (xvi). They admit that the work’s format does challenge ideas of “easy reading.” In fact, they write: “While this book is not so much planned confusion as it might at first appear, it is, at some level about what we see as a breakdown of clear interpretation and confidence of the ability/warrant to tell such stories in uncomplicated, non-messy ways” (xvi).

Implications: Lather and Smithies state that their primary goal in the work is not so much to look for patterns and differences among cases but to instead construct a more interactive/involved instance of researchers and subjects. They want to avoid the outdated and modernist view of researchers as disembodied and “objective knowers.” In fact, they write: “We are very much in the book, but we have tried to put it together in such a way that our stories are situated among many voices where, accumulating layerings of meanings as the book proceeds.” (xv-xvi). This book is influential for my own methodological approaches. I want to
utilize some of Lather and Smithies split notebook format in my own dissertation chapters. The ways they describe their motivations for this form are congruous with feminist and queer methodologies others and I have employed in our own work.


**Summary:** Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis come from an Education and Psychology background and define portraiture as a qualitative method in the social sciences that aims to combine science and art – blurring the lines between aesthetics and empiricism in order to account for the “subtlety of human experience and organizational life.” The authors frame portraiture as counter to the dominant social science methods that employ positivist paradigms of social problems – they see portraiture as seeking to shed light on goodness instead. The five essential features of portraiture are given as: Context, Voice, Relationship, Emergent Themes, and Aesthetic Whole. Practical structures, methods, and schemata are then given for implementing a portraiture method. The most important emphasis in the book really seems to be in the final chapter when a discussion of bringing data (post collection) into an idea of an “aesthetic whole.” This is discussed in terms of structure, form, and coherence and leads into a “weaving of a tale” (back to narrative form here).

**Implications:** For me, Lightfoot-Lawrence and Hoffmann Davis’ portraiture method is simply another variation on bringing narrative practice into qualitative research. I find it refreshing that they emphasize storytelling and interrelatedness in presenting qualitative data but find it alarming that there’s never a truly transparent discussion of the researcher’s self-situatedness in the research. This seems to be something that is avoided rather than ever faced upfront. Needless to say I want to bring narrative approaches into future research on LGBTq persons, but I also must account for my own positionality and the ways that it both positively and negatively could impact the research and the voices/agency of those studied.


**Summary:** Anderson and Gold’s documentary was originally produced in 1996, but was updated in 2009 for HBO’s “America Undercover” series. The hour-long film follows the stories of three LGBTq persons (two men self identified as gay and one woman self identified as lesbian). The film claims that it is currently legal in 31 states to fire employees due to being LGBTq (though a quick check online indicates that number is now 30). The film smartly focuses on one worker in a white-collar workplace, one in a blue-collar workplace, and one in the service industry. Cheryl Summerville, a cook at a Cracker Barrel restaurant in Bremen, Georgia, and Mark Anderson, an employee at a trading/securities firm (Cantor Fitzgerald) in Los Angeles were both fired in the early ’90’s and Ron Woods, a skilled tradesman for Chrysler Corporation in Detroit left his job as well due to issues and harassment surrounding his being out in his workplace. Summerville discusses being terminated (along with ten others nationwide in the restaurant chain) from her job as a cook at
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Cracker Barrel after nearly four years there after the chain instituted a January 1991 policy forbidding gays from working for them. The press release maintained that this was being done because the restaurant was a “family restaurant” that stood for “traditional American values” and “normal heterosexual values.” Summerville was not initially targeted by management but went to them instead questioning and complaining about the policy. She was initially told that since she was a cook she would not be fired as long as she stayed silent and less visible and was told that the policy was mainly being established to target “effeminate men on the floor” (presumably “gay acting” male waiters). Summerville however refused to be closeted at work saying “I’d be denying everything I’d worked for all those years” and “we are one” as an LGBTq community. After being fired, Summerville asked the ACLU about suing but was told she had no legal protections (and still does not in the state of Georgia). In interviews she interestingly portrays Cracker Barrel owners and management as “out of touch white collar management.” She eventually gets involved with Queer Nation in Georgia (though she discusses how she initially resisted because of the “scariness” of the word queer) and they help her gain national visibility for her cause through protests, letter writing, media contact, and sit ins (and even arrests). The film states that Cracker Barrel denies even ever having such a policy now and would not give an interview (an attempted erasure of words, though Summerville has them in print from Cracker Barrel).

Mark Anderson’s story is perhaps even more harrowing as he endures multiple physical and verbal attacks in his high paying white-collar job. Episodes include having a pink rubber vagina placed in his sandwich by coworkers (along with verbal abuse: “this might be the only time this guy ever eats pussy”) and having of the partners of the firm urinate on him through a stall partition in the men’s room at his company (an obvious instance of male “marking” if ever there was one). As Mark asks, “How do you complain when management is doing these things to you?” In the most disturbing, and final ordeal, his car is taken by coworkers while he is out of town for work. The car is then painted like a police car with multiple anti-gay slogans all over it (such as “butt pirate” and “poo stabber”) and two men in blackface and Asianface mock him for being gay (pretending to be his only friends). All of this is filmed (footage that was distributed to over 100 people in Mark’s company) and is shown in the documentary. A coworker and friend of Mark’s who is also an amputee is also verbally harassed, being asked “have you stump-fucked anyone lately?” The levels to which this environment of upper class white straight male privilege extends into abuse and violence against any non-normative person is truly disturbing in this sequence of the film. Mark talks about the ways that it is hard to admit that what he had believed to be a prestigious job is actually “trashy” and one of the worst places to work as well as how he, as a white male, finally came to see how it felt to endure harassment and discrimination.

Ron Woods tells of being a gay third generation autoworker in Detroit. He participates in a local LGBTq rights demonstration and his picture is then featured in the local papers and he is outed to his coworkers. He too is attacked physically four times and is constantly verbally abused. Straight friends who stand up for him are also attacked. The UAW does eventually support him (his union supervisor, an African American man, talks about his own battles against discrimination) and he
event becomes involved and elected as a delegate to the UAW convention to lobby to have sexual orientation protections added to the bylaws and charters (this eventually happens, but after Woods has left Chrysler).

In terms of production, the documentary also does a lot of shots and mini interviews with coworkers or customers who are in favor of LGBTQ employees being fired and seem generally against the open existence of queer persons. Many of these people quote scripture and display general venom and disdain for any non-normative persons. One man, quoting Leviticus as to why LGBTQ persons should be put to death, throws in an anti-Semitic jibe at the end as well. It is fascinating how people feel empowered with these words to advocate the very taking of lives let alone firing from jobs. It’s interesting that, in the case of Summerville and Woods, anti-gay experiences in the workplace actually push them into a greater level of participation in the LGBTQ community and civil rights movement. Woods and Anderson never mention partners or families but in the case of Summerville, her partner of over 16 years is also interviewed and they discuss the level of harassment her son endured too (school kids writing things on walls at school: “Chris’s mom is a faggot” etc.). The film closes by providing the current lay of the land (that it is still legal to fire persons for being LGBTQ in the majority of states) and giving an update on ENDA (the Employment Non-Discrimination Act) that would ban such firings at the federal level (more recent bills have included trans protections as well). The producers say that ENDA has continued to stall because it cannot muster enough votes in the US Senate (a situation, ironically, that appears to be the case again in the spring of 2010 even with a majority Democratic congress and Democratic President).

Implications: Though the documentary focuses fairly exclusively on the negative experiences of LGBTQ workers (across a spectrum of job types), it approaches case studies in ways I think will be influential in my own work. Though my work is not likely (at least initially) to take the form of film, I see importance in the ways that those interviewed were given center stage to tell their experiences. As is often the case in documentary film, no narrator or interviewer is even present on screen – in this way agency rests alone with those whom the story focuses on. Another important piece in this film to me is the way that “supporting characters” are brought in to talk about situations (whether “pro” or “con” in respect to the LGBTQ protagonist). The fact that this film was made in the early 90’s and updated last year, in addition to the new attention being cast on ENDA (despite same sex marriage and “don’t ask, don’t tell” taking up the vast majority of “media time” in the LGBTQ community in the last several years) I think shows promise that there will be renewed, rejuvenated, and continued conversations and movement in the area of LGBTQ professionals and their experiences (I hope now too beyond just negative ones but also positive and the “mundane” and the “everyday” experiences). Lastly, but maybe most importantly, many moments in this film brought out the powerful role of discourses and words. The ways that LGBTQ persons identities are constituted and policed by the definitions and words of others is attested to again and again by Summerville, Anderson, and Woods.